

Jacob and Ida Brett House
208 Logan Blvd.
Llyswen Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5896

HABS
PA,
7-ALTO,
122 -

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

JACOB AND IDA BRETT HOUSE

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Location: 208 Logan Blvd.

Date of Erection: 1925

Description: This large, two-and-a-half-story, side-gable house is the only example of Prairie style architecture in the project area. Long, low-pitched gables over the wide dormer and even wider porch combine with the extended roofline and bands of windows to produce a striking horizontal effect, further exaggerated by the contrast of white wood trim against the unrelieved brick facade. The veneer is of brown brick in a Flemish bond, with glazed headers. Massive, battered brick columns support the porch roof and a flat-roofed porte cochere on the south end of the house. The front door has fifteen lights of bevelled glass, flanked by wide sidelights and surmounted by a long transom with bevelled glass in geometric patterns. Windows on the first-floor facade are oversized, with multi-paned bevelled-glass transoms echoing the entry. A band of windows encloses both ends of the porch. Many original built-ins and some paneling remain in the interior, but the living room fireplace and paneling have been removed. This room, on the north side of the first floor, is quite large, stretching the full depth of the house. The second floor has a gallery around the central stairwell.

History: Architect Julian Millard probably designed this residence for department store owners Jacob and Ida Brett in 1925. The Bretts bought the lot and a house with an assessed value of \$4,500 from Howard and Effie Fleck in 1923. Two years later, they paid taxes on the lot and a house with an assessed value of \$7,000, plus a two-car garage. Millard had recently designed the Brett's new downtown store, and he was the only architect in Altoona designing in this distinctively modern style. Since the Bretts did not live at this address until 1925, they very likely had the original house razed or moved and replaced by this larger, more up-to-date residence, an important advertisement of Brett taste on the so well-travelled boulevard. The Bretts sold the property in 1947 to Simon and Rae Goldberg of Simms Jewelers, who kept it until 1964. The house had several short-term owners throughout the 1960s and 70s. The present owners acquired it in 1988.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 166/553, 183/240, 202/184, 219/168, 279/140, 265/148, 285/664, 306/427, 556/225, 823/121, 863/261, 871/617, 876/486, 918/530, 934/677, 1157/213. Interview: Robert Seymore, 208 Logan Blvd., August 16, 1989.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of Llyswen (HABS No. PA-5787) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Kathy Edwards in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Edwards's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.